

ABOUT U.S. VISAS FOR TOURISM AND BUSINESS TRAVEL

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Visas for Tourism and Business Travel: The Interview

On an average business day, the U.S. Embassy Dhaka consular section conducts approximately 60 to 100 non-immigrant visa interviews. For tourist and business visas the process begins with an application and payment at the offices of the Embassy's agent: Saimon Overseas agency, located in Gulshan 1. (For people applying for student visas or H1B employment visas, the process is different.) Applicants must then appear for an interview conducted by an American consular officer, at the U.S. Embassy.

How will the Consular Officer assess my qualifications for a visa?

U.S. Consular officers are required by law to presume that every applicant for a tourist visa intends to immigrate to the U.S. It is the responsibility of the applicant to prove to the Consul that they have strong and significant ties to Bangladesh. If an applicant fails to show their strong ties to Bangladesh during the interview they will not receive a tourist or business visa.

I cannot understand the application form fully - can I leave some questions blank?

Applicants must fill out the forms completely, accurately, and truthfully. For example, prior applications for U.S. visas should be detailed: failing to indicate a prior visa refusal (or receipt) can be interpreted as an attempt to hide information. If an applicant does not fully understand the form, they should seek the help of a trusted person who can read and write in English. It is the responsibility of the applicant to choose who will help him -- it is always better to choose an honest relative or close friend, because strangers who call themselves "visa experts" can do more damage than good.

What kinds of questions will be asked during the interview?

To assess eligibility for a U.S. non-immigrant visa, the interviewing officer asks questions of applicants, and may also request documents. To prepare for the interview, applicants should think through their reasons for traveling to the U.S., their ties compelling their return to Bangladesh and be familiar with their personal finances and professional activities.

What kinds of documents should I bring to my interview?

Applicants should bring proof of their strong ties to Bangladesh. Bank statements and documents for other assets and property are very helpful. A business owner should provide bank accounts for their business, the business license, and documents showing incorporation and their ownership share. If someone is an employee, they should bring proof of their job. Family relations can be shown through photo albums. Original documents can make your point more forcefully than copies. If you are an accomplished professional, books you have written, CDs you have recorded, or newspaper articles about you can help the officer see your attachments more easily than a CV.

Someone told me they could help me get a visa, for some fees. How can I assess their qualifications and ability to help me?

Be careful of anyone asking for money to assist with visa applications! Many people attempt to sell fake documents or provide "coaching" for the interview. These services are very risky. Honesty is the best policy: applicants need to only be truthful during the interview. The use of fake bank statements, fake passports, fake visas, or fake identities will lead to a refusal. The State Department computer systems are very capable of detecting all types of fraud. Persons who engage in fraud are permanently ineligible for entry into the U.S. Don't be a victim. Use the assistance only of people you know very well and trust absolutely.

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***Ask the Consul** is a series of periodic articles discussing U.S. Visas. The next **Ask the Consul** article will discuss how family photographs can help visa applications.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)